

NEWS RELEASE

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Project Safe Neighborhoods: Peoria Man Charged with Possessing Gun after Felony Conviction

Peoria, IL- Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, announced that the federal grand jury in Peoria today charged Terry Armstrong, age 29, of 911 S. Greenlawn, Peoria, Illinois with being a felon in possession of a firearm. The indictment alleges that when a Peoria Police officer conducted a lawful search of Armstrong on November 15, 2005, the officer found a loaded .25 caliber Beretta pistol concealed in the pocket of the jacket Armstrong was wearing.

Armstrong allegedly has three prior felony convictions, including a prior conviction for possessing a firearm as a convicted felon. Armstrong pled guilty in 2002 in federal court for possessing a firearm as a convicted felon. For that offense, U.S. District Judge Michael Mihm sentenced Armstrong on December 19, 2002, to 37 months incarceration. The indictment further alleges Armstrong was convicted ten years ago, in 1995, in Peoria county, for distributing a look-alike substance, and in 1999 for unlawfully possessing a firearm.

U.S. Attorney Heaton said, "Since 2001, when the Department of Justice implemented Project Safe Neighborhoods, an initiative intended to help rid our streets of violent criminals, the Central District of Illinois has charged 327 defendants, including Armstrong, with firearms offenses. All felons know that they cannot lawfully possess firearms. They should also know that when they are caught with a firearm - that is, any felon with any firearm - they will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

If convicted of the alleged offense, Armstrong faces a maximum statutory penalty of 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.

The charge is the result of an investigation by the Peoria Police Department and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Bradley W. Murphy.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation; the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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